Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 2148

STADIS////////////////

FOR AF/W - THOMAS SMITH

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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, SL
SUBJ: ACRE PROJECT

1. I NEED YOUR HELP IN PUSHING/PRODDING AID TO GET ON WITH APPROVAL OF THE ADAPTIVE CROP RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROJECT (ACRE) WHICH IS THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN SUBSEQUENT TO THE RENEWAL OF AID BILATERAL OPERATIONS IN 1976. THE PROJECT WAS REVIEWED BY WASHINGTON IN JANUARY, AND NO SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WERE RAISED. SINCE THEN THE PROJECT HAS BEEN HELD UP IN AFR/CAWA BY WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY NIT-PICKING BY DALTON GRIFFITH.

2. THE PROJECT ORIGINATED WITH A REQUEST FROM THE GOSL, DATED JULY 16, 1976, FOR ASSISTANCE "IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH". IN DECEMBER 1976 A PROJECT REVIEW PAPER WAS SUBMITTED BY A PRIVATE DESIGN COMPANY WHICH WAS JUDGED BY AID AND THE GOSL TO BE UNACCEPTABLE. OUR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER ARRIVED IN FREETOWN IN JUNE 1977 WITH ORDERS TO REWRITE THE PROJECT PAPER COMPLETELY. A COLLABORATIVELY DESIGNED PAPER WAS SUBMITTED TO AID/W IN DECEMBER
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AND WAS REVIEWED BY THE PROJECT COMMITTEE ON JANUARY 19, 1978, WHICH RECOMMENDED THAT, SUBJECT TO MINOR MODIFICATIONS, THE PROJECT BE FORWARDED TO AA/AFR FOR AUTHORIZATION. ON APRIL 28 THE PROJECTS OFFICE ATTEMPTED TO CLEAR THE AUTHORIZATION PACKAGE, BUT AFR/CAWA WOULD NOT APPROVE. ON MAY 8 STATE 114962 INDICATED THAT THE DRAFT AUTHORIZATION WAS BEING "RECIRCULATED", AN UNUSUAL STEP TAKEN APPARENTLY IN ORDER

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TO ACCOMMODATE AFR/CAWA. OUR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER WAS RECALLED TO AID/W JUNE 19-30 TO MAKE REVISIONS REQUESTED BY AFR/CAWA.

3. HE HAS JUST RETURNED FROM THE U.S. AND REPORTS THAT HE AND THE PROJECTS OFFICE WORKED OUT A NUMBER OF CHANGES REQUESTED BY AFR/CAWA, ONLY TO FIND THAT AFR/CAWA REQUIRED ADDITIONAL MINOR CHANGES. HIS LAST MEETING WITH GRIFFITH WAS CONFRONTATIONAL AND UNSATISFACTORY. HE REPORTS, IN ADDITION, THAT FREETOWN DCM NORTH AND AF/W SVENDSEN MET WITH AFR/CAWA THE LAST WEEK IN JUNE AND WERE ASSURED THAT THE PROJECT WOULD BE APPROVED "NEXT MONTH". THAT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

4. I AM VERY CONCERNED ON TWO GROUNDS: OUR CREDIBILITY VIS-A-VIS SIERRA LEONE AND THE POTENTIAL FOR LAST MINUTE OBLIGATION PROBLEMS. THE GOSL BUDGETED LE 75,000 FOR THE PROJECT DURING ITS FISCAL YEAR JUST ENDED. BECAUSE OF OUR ASSURANCE, BASED ON THE RAPID AND SATISFACTORY REVIEW IN JANUARY, THE MONEY WAS HELD FOR THE PROJECT AND IS NOW LOST. THE ACRE PROJECT CALLS FOR THE GOSL TO CONTRIBUTE LE 3 MILLION (MORE THAN LE 1 MILLION IN CASH). WE MAY FACE CONSIDERABLE GOSL SKEPTICISM ABOUT ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL FUNDS, GIVEN THE HISTORY OF THE PROJECT. SECONDLY, BECAUSE AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN DELAYED THIS LONG, THE PROJECT NOW HAS TO GO THROUGH THE INTER-AGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE, WHICH WILL REQUIRE CONFIDENTIAL

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ANOTHER THREE WEEKS. AS A RESULT, WE MAY WELL NOT RECEIVE AUTHORITY TO SIGN THE GRANT AGREEMENT UNTIL SEPTEMBER WHEN WE WOULD HAVE TO PRESS THE GOSL FOR THE KIND OF QUICK ACTION WE OURSELVES HAVE NOT GIVEN THE PROJECT. IRONICALLY, EVEN IF THE PROJECT IS APPROVED THIS FISCAL YEAR, IT WILL BE JUNE 1979 BEFORE WE CAN REALISTICALLY HAVE PROJECT PERSONNEL WORKING HERE OR THREE YEARS FROM THE FIRST REQUEST: AN ABOMINABLE RECORD. IF THE PROJECT IS NOT APPROVED IN FY 1978, I FORESEE A REPEAT OF THE CARE FEEDER ROADS SITUATION LAST YEAR WHEN THE PROJECT, SUPPOSEDLY READY FOR OBLIGATION IN SEPTEMBER 1977, WAS NOT FUNDED UNTIL MARCH 1978.

5. I UNDERSTAND THAT SIERRA LEONE IS NOT EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE COUNTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, BUT I OBJECT TO WHAT I CAN ONLY SEE AS AFR/CAWA'S BIAS AGAINST AID ACTIVITIES HERE. FOR GOOD OR BAD THE DECISION TO RE-ESTABLISH BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO SIERRA LEONE WAS MADE IN 1975. WE SHOULD GET ON WITH THE JOB. I REGRET TO SAY THAT I AM NOT REASSURED BY GRIFFITH'S INDICATION TO NORTH THAT THE PROJECT WOULD BE APPROVED IN JULY. I HAVE HEARD HIS PROMISES BEFORE.

6. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR DISCUSSING THE SITUATION WITH

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GOLER BUTCHER. PLEASE URGE HER TO PUT PRESSURE ON AFR/CAWA
TO CLEAR THE PROJECT AUTHORIZATION NOW. GOLER AND I DISCUSSED
THE PROBLEM OF AFR/CAWA IN MAY, AND I KNOW SHE IS SYMPATHETIC
TO MY PROBLEMS.
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